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ELEGIES

ON

DIFFERENT OCCASIONS.

By the Rev.d Fra.s Leighton —

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ON

DIFFERENT OCCASIONS.

ELEGIES, &c.

ELEGY I.

Written in the Year 1761.

O HAPPINESS! thou wiſh of every mind,
Whoſe form, more ſubtle than the fleeting air,
Leaves all thy votaries wandering far behind,
Eludes their ſearch, and mocks their anxious care,

What diſtant region holds thy fair retreat,
Where no keen look thy footſteps may ſurprize?
In dreary deſarts haſt thou fix'd thy ſeat,
Far from the curious ſearch of mortal eyes?

Amidſt the jocund race, ſay, art thou found,
Who paſs in mirth the dreary hours of night;
Or in the dance with pliant ſinews bound,
While dazzling luſtres caſt a noontide light?

Ah no! When Reaſon reaſſumes her ſway,
And the tamed blood in calmer current flows,
Theſe joys, like fairy viſions, melt away,
And leave the boſom preſſed with ſerious woes.

Or, Doſt Thou dwell with regal pomp and power,
Revered and honoured by the wiſe and great?
Ten thouſand cares on ſceptered ſplendor lour,
And bend the weary monarch with their weight.

Or, Shall we ſeek Thee through the ranks of war,
Where bold Ambition leads her daring train;
While the ſhrill clarion, ſounding from afar,
Calls the ſlow warrior to the purple plain?

Alas

Alas not there!—Though conqueſt grace his ſword,
Though proudly wave his banners in the air,
By legions guarded, the victorious Lord
Shall find no arms to ſhield his heart from care.

Doſt Thou reſide in the gay youth's fond breaſt,
Who bends obedient to the power of love;
Who, by the fair one he adores careſſed,
May all the joys of mutual tranſport prove?—

With paſſion fraught, though ſmiling now ſerene,
In ſoft endearment flows each tender hour;
Too ſoon, alas! muſt change the bliſsful ſcene,
When time's cold blaſt ſhall blow on beauty's flower.

And oft, amidſt the blooming days of youth,
Inconſtancy aſſerts her fickle reign;
Or pale-eyed Jealouſy, with venomed tooth,
Cankers the golden links of Hymen's chain.

All calm and ſafe the tide of love appears,
The youthful poet's ever darling theme;
The venturous pilot there no quickſands fears,
But launches boldly down the flatt'ring ſtream,

Till on his bark the warring ſurges break,
And every billow ſeems to threaten fate:
The voice of Prudence then begins to ſpeak,
But, ah, the voice of Prudence ſpeaks too late!

Is bliſs ſincere then no where to be found,
The vain creation of the Enthuſiaſt's mind?
Or, if ſhe deign to dwell on mortal ground,
Where may we hope her fair abode to find?

The ſweets of pleaſure, and the pomp of power,
In the gay garb of tainting Luxury dreſſed,
She ſlights with deepeſt ſcorn; nor will reſide
But in the precincts of the virtuous breaſt.

The virtuous breaſt, in conſcious honour bold,
Will want and pain and death itſelf deſpiſe;
Will from each trying woe, like heated gold,
With greater ſplendor, greater merit riſe.

There ſhe has ever fixed her firmeſt throne;
There ſcorned the bolts by rage and malice hurled;
And, found by wiſdom, and by worth alone,
Mocked the vain labours of a vicious world.

ELEGY

ELEGY II.

Written in the Year 1762.

NOW the brown woods their leafy load reſign,
And rage the tempeſts with reſiſtleſs force;
Mantled with ſnow the ſilver mountains ſhine,
And icy fetters chain the rivulets courſe.

No pleaſing object charms our wearied view,
No waving verdure decks the dreary glade,
Save that o'er yonder tomb the mournful yew
Projects an aweful ſolitary ſhade.

Short is the Spring, and ſhort the Summer hour,
And ſhort the time that fruitful Autumn reigns;
But tedious roll the days when Winter's power
Aſſerts its empire o'er our waſted plains.

As

As ſwiftly wears our Spring of life away;
As ſwiftly will our jolly Summer go;
But, ah! when Winter clouds our chearleſs day,
Again the vernal breezes never blow!

Mark this, and boaſt your fancied worth no more,
Ye great, ye proud, ye learned, and ye brave!
With haſty lapſe ſome circling years are o'er,
And, lo, ye ſlumber in the ſilent grave!

Why views the ſage fair Pleaſure's tranſient charm,
And all her votaries gay with ſcowling eye?
Alike he ſtoops to Fate's ſuperior arm,—
Alike he ſuffers, and alike muſt die!

Say, What avails it then with brow ſevere
The ſilken bands of Luxury to deſpiſe;
To bring by thought the day of horror near,
And view the tempeſt e're the clouds ariſe?

Better with laughing nymphs in revels gay
To give the hours to Venus, wine, and ſong;
And, ſince the rapid moments never ſtay,
To catch ſome pleaſures as they glide along.

Deluded man! whom empty ſounds beguile;
What tranſports here await thy anxious ſoul?
Know, love abhors the venal harlot's ſmile,
And hell-born fury rages in the bowl.

Seek Virtue to be bleſt; but ſeek her far,
Far from thoſe gloomy ſons of lettered pride,
Who 'gainſt the paſſions wage eternal war,
And, foes to Nature, Nature's dictates chide.

Let mirth, not madneſs, crown the temperate feaſt;
Let love and beauty joys refined impart:
Though mere ſenſation charm the groveling breaſt,
'Tis mutual paſſion fires the generous heart.

The various bleſſings bounteous Heaven beſtows
Own grateful, and by charity repay,
Relieve thy ſuffering friend, or ſhare his woes,
But from his failings turn thine eyes away.

So, when the wintry ſtorms of death are paſt,
In brighter ſkies, and ether more ſerene,
Thy withered boughs ſhall bud again, to laſt
For ever blooming, and for ever green.

ELEGY III.

Written in the Year 1763.

THE dewy morn her ſaffron mantle ſpreads
High o'er the brow of yonder eaſtern hill;
Each blooming ſhrub a roſeate fragrance ſheds;
And the briſk ſky-lark ſings his carol ſhrill.

Not all the ſweets that ſcent the morning air,
Not all the dyes that paint the vernal year,
Can from my breaſt divert its weighty care;
Can from my pale cheeks charm the trickling tear.

Here, where the willows to the rivulet bend,
That winds its channel through the enamelled mead,
I'll o'er the turf my waining form extend,
And reſt on ſedges dank my liſtleſs head.

In vain the ſtream o'er pebbles glides along,
And murmurs ſweetly-lulling as it flows;
In vain the ſtock-dove chaunts her gurgling ſong,
Inviting ſlumber's ſoft and calm repoſe.

The cruel pangs of fierce deſire I prove;
And think with tranſport on my abſent fair:
Ah, cruel ſtate! to ſcorch in flames of love,
Amidſt the chilling froſts of cold deſpair!

'Tis not my DELIA's ſcorn, my DELIA's pride,
That ſinks my hopes in everlaſting night;
No charms to her the laviſh gods denied,
Who formed her tender, as they formed her bright.

But, ah! the influence of ſome baleful ſtar,
That frowned malignant at my hapleſs birth,
Has to my wiſhes placed an endleſs bar,
Superior to the ſtrongeſt power on earth!

If crowding myriads, armed for deadly war,
Held from my longing eyes my boſom's queen,
And kept her deep in gloomy caves afar,
While mountains roſe, and oceans rolled between;

I might not force through ſpears and ſwords my way,
I might not reach ſecure the diſtant ſhore,
Yet, armed by VENUS I'd provoke the fray,
Or periſh bravely in the tumult's roar.

When fell ambition drives us to the plain,
Diſmayed by fear the doubting ſquadrons move;
But I alike ſhould certain pleaſure gain,
To fall or conquer for the maid I love.

Curſed be the wretch, who firſt with impious hand
Taught ſervile error o'er the world to roll!—
This chaces freedom from each groaning land,
This warps, ah ſad effect! my DELIA's ſoul!—

But ſhall free love, that boundleſs as the wind
On active pinions every region tries,
And mocks even reaſon's dictates, be confined
By ſuperſtition's ever galling tyes?

Ye fairy dreams of gay deluſion, hence!—
Your flattering viſions but increaſe my ſmart;
I'll hear the nobler voice of manly ſenſe,
And quell my paſſion, though I break my heart.

How vain my hopes! my fixed reſolves how vain!
No force, alas! the power of love can brave;
One thought of DELIA wounds my peace again,
Subdues my ſoul, and binds me more her ſlave.

ELEGY

ELEGY IV.

Written at ——— College, Oxon, 1763.

THE ſolemn hand of ſable-ſuited night
Enwraps the ſilent earth with mantle drear;
Thick gathering clouds obſcure fair CYNTHIA's light;
Nor ſhines one ſtar the duſky ſcene to chear.

O'er the ſad manſion, hid in aweful gloom,
The Æthiop darkneſs ſpreads her ebon ſway;
Save that alone from yonder ſtudious room
The waſting taper ſheds a trembling ray.

Now, while the tenants of this ſacred dome
Turn the grave page, or ſink to ſoft repoſe,
Along the Gothic cloiſters let me roam,
And, deep in thought, the tedious moments loſe.

Now breathes the whiſtling wind a mournful ſong,
And pattering drops the drizzly tempeſt tell;
While Echo ſtalks the gloomy vaults among,
Sadly-reſponſive to the midnight bell.

And hark!—the ſtaring owl with boding ſtrain
Shrieks notes of terror from the learned grove.
Ah horrid ſounds! full well ye ſoothe my pain!
Full well your muſic greets deſpairing love!

No longer now around the ſocial bowl
I join the feſtive laugh, or ſprightly lay;
But pour in ceaſeleſs ſighs my loveſick ſoul,
Till fades the lamp at bright AURORA's ray.

How at the fragrant hour of riſing morn
Would eager tranſport throb in ev'ry vein,
To hear the ſwelling ſhout and jocund horn
Invite the hunter to the ſportive plain!

But,

But, ah, the gay delights of youth are fled!—
In ſighs and tears my fading life I wear;
So the pale lilly hangs its drooping head,
When froſts untimely blaſt the ripening year.

Philoſophy, thou guardian of the heart,
O come in all thy rigid virtue dreſſed!
With manly precept eaſe my killing ſmart,
And drive this tyrant from my wounded breaſt.

Oft would my eyes, diſdaining balmy ſleep,
The aweful labors of thy ſons explore,
Fathom with reſtleſs toil each maxim deep,
And hang inceſſant o'er the ſacred lore:

Alas! oppoſed to love how weak, how frail
Is all the reaſoning of the unfeeling ſage!
No forceful arm can o'er his power prevail;
No lenient hand the wounds he gives aſſwage.

Yes,

Yes, tyrant, yes; thou muſt retain thy power,
Till my torn boſom yields to ſtronger Death:
Still muſt I love, even in that fatal hour,
And call on DELIA with my lateſt breath.

And when all pale my lifeleſs limbs extend,
And fate has ſealed the irrevocable doom,
May then my memory find a faithful friend,
To write theſe votive numbers on my tomb:

"Here reſts a youth, who, Love and Sorrow's ſlave,
"Gave up his early life to pining care,
"Till worn with woe he ſought, in this calm grave,
"A ſafe retreat from comfortleſs Deſpair."

So, when the ſtone lies o'er my clay-cold head,
If chance fair DELIA to the place draw near,
With one ſad ſigh ſhe may lament me dead,
And bathe the ſenſeleſs marble with a tear.

ELEGY V.

Written September 1ſt, 1763.

WHEN the ſtill Night withdrew her ſable ſhroud,
And left theſe climes with ſteps ſedate and ſlow;
While ſad AURORA, kerchiefed in a cloud,
With drizzly vapours hung the mountain's brow;

The wretched bird, from hapleſs Perdix ſprung,
With trembling wings forſook the furrowed plain,
And, calling round her all her liſtening young,
In faultering accents ſung this plaintive ſtrain:

" Unwelcome morn! too well thy louring mien
" Foretells the ſlaughters of the approaching day;
" The gloomy ſky laments with tears the ſcene,
" Where rage and terror reaſſume their ſway.

" Ah,

" Ah, luckleſs train! Ah, fate-devoted race!
" The dreadful tale experience tells believe;
" Dark heavy miſts obſcure the morning's face,
" But blood and death ſhall cloſe the dreary eve.

" This day fell man, whoſe unrelenting hate
" No grief can ſoften, and no tears aſſwage,
" Pours dire deſtruction on the feathered ſtate;
" While pride and rapine urge his ſavage rage.

" I, who ſo oft have ſcaped the impending ſnare,
" E're night arrives, may feel the fiery wound;
" In giddy circles quit the realms of air,
" And ſtain with ſtreaming gore the dewy ground."

She ſaid, when lo! the pointer winds his prey;
The ruſtling ſtubble gives the feared alarm,
The gunner views the covey fleet away,
And rears the unerring tube with ſkilful arm.

In vain the mother wings her whirring flight,
The leaden deaths arreſt her as ſhe flies;
Her ſcattered offspring ſwim before her ſight,
And, bathed in blood, ſhe flutters, pants, and dies.

ELEGY

ELEGY VI.

Written June, 1764.

THEE, ſad MELPOMENE, I once again
Invoke, nor aſk the idly plaintive verſe:
Quit the light reed for ſorrow's ſober ſtrain,
And hang thy flowerets on my DELIA's herſe.

Oft by yon ſilver fountain's ſedgy ſide,
Or through the twilight ſhade I uſed to rove,
Have ſung her beauties to the liſtening tide,
And filled with notes like theſe the echoing grove:

"Ye fragrant roſes, bow your blooming heads;
"For can your ſweetneſs with her breath compare?
"Ye envious lillies, wither in your beds,
"For is your boaſted whiteneſs half ſo fair?"

Vain

Vain was the lay; for O! heart-breaking thought!
Thoſe heavenly features ne'er again muſt charm,
That form divine, with each perfection fraught,
Is ſtruck by Fate's inexorable arm.

Thus far, O Death, thy cruel reign extends!
Before thy ſickle falls each bluſhing flower;
But Virtue on etherial wings aſcends,
And ſmiles diſdainful on thy boaſted power.

Guided by her—(for Virtue's ſacred lore
Was ever dear to DELIA's gentle breaſt)
She to the endleſs realms of peace ſhall ſoar,
The ſacred manſions of eternal reſt.

Nor theſe the wreaths that love and fancy twine
Around the tomb, where reſts ſome flattered maid;
But honors, due to merit's hallowed ſhrine.
By faithful truth with unfeigned ſorrow paid.

The ſmalleſt gleam of hope I ne'er could boaſt;
And raptured love in that dire moment fled,
Which ſhewed my deareſt wiſh for ever loſt;
Which gave my DELIA to a rival's bed.

Yet ſhall thy memory, dear departed ſhade,
In this ſad breaſt a place for ever find;
For in thy form each beauty was diſplayed,
"To charm the ſenſes, and to fix the mind."

O! were I ſkilled the immortal note to raiſe,
And down the ſtream of time to waft thy name!
Then would I ſing thy worth in matchleſs lays,
Bright as thine eyes, and ſpotleſs as thy fame.

But, though the Muſe ſuch arduous flights denies,
Nor bids with fire divine my fancy glow,
Theſe plaintive numbers nobler truth ſupplies,
The artleſs voice of unaffected woe.

ELEGY VII.

Written in February, 1766.

NOW has bright Sol fulfilled his circling courſe,
Again to Taurus rolled his burning car,
Since, cruel Prudence, thy reſiſtleſs force
Tore me from happineſs and CYNTHIA far.

How did I, then, or penſively complain,
Or in the maniac's frantic accents rave!
How often vow to prove reſiſtance vain,
And, ſpite of prudence, live my CYNTHIA's ſlave!

Her much-loved form did ev'ry thought employ;
My daily wiſh ſhe was, and nightly dream;
My aking boſom hoped no dearer joy;
My raptur'd fancy owned no nobler theme.

No

No more I wiſh'd, where Iſis' clear waves flow,
To pluck freſh laurels from the muſe's ſhade:
I longed to climb the Cambrian mountain's brow,
Since Cambria's mountains hid my favorite maid.

In vain from cruel love's tyrannic reign
To friendſhip and to wiſdom I appeal;
For ſuch my ſufferings, that the amorous pain
Nor wiſdom could aſſwage, nor friendſhip heal.

Now three revolving moons had rolled away:
Still faded ſorrow bent my drooping head;
In ſlothful reſt my nobler paſſions lay,
Each fire extinguiſhed, and each virtue dead;

When forced to ſeek a more laborious field,
And mingle chearful with a ſocial train,
To toil and mirth thoſe woes began to yield,
Which thought and care had combated in vain.

In other ſcenes I now delight could find,
And, far from CYNTHIA, found my heart at reſt;
Till love at length the dubious ſtrife declined.
And reaſon fixed her empire in my breaſt.

Then, as by ſacred truth's unflattering light,
I ſaw the follies of my former flame,
I turned indignant from the hateful ſight,
Struck with remorſe, and mortified with ſhame.

I found imagination's magic wand
Had all my CYNTHIA's dazzling charms ſupplied;
And love, misjudging love, with partial hand
Had given thoſe beauties nature's touch denied.

A viſionary ſhape my fancy drew,
In the fair form each poliſhed grace diſplayed;
Then like the fabled artiſt amorous grew,
And loved the image which itſelf had made.

ELEGY

ELEGY VIII.

Addreſſed to a Pine-Tree.

Written May, 1766.

THE ruffian North has ſpent his ſavage power,
Collects his winds, and quits the mountain's ſide;
And Auſter mild, with many a genial ſhower,
Renews the laughing meadow's graſſy pride.

The active ſwallow wings her rapid flight
In ſportive circles through the ether bland,
And in luxuriant foliage proudly dight
The verdant fathers of the foreſt ſtand.

No more beneath thy hoſpitable ſhade
The ſhepherd ſwains their amorous deſcant ſing,
Each wanders forth amid the blooming glade
To hail the new-blown daughters of the ſpring.

Yet, while yon elms, who now ſo gaily ſpread
Their leafy honors to the vernal gale,
Stood naked to the wintry winds, that ſhed
Their ſcattered glories o'er the blaſted vale;

Thy limbs alone, of all the dreary wood,
Could brave the ſnowy drift, and chilling blaſt;
Againſt the mingled ſtorm uninjur'd ſtood,
And mocked the howling tempeſt as it paſt.

For this, while all the jocund ſwains around
The blooming ſeaſon praiſe with youthful glee,
I'll teach the nodding coverts to reſound
A verſe that's due to gratitude and thee.

I'll rove, where opening flowers their ſweets combine,
Where bloſſoms fair their varied odours breathe;
Then with aſſiduous hand a garland twine,
And on thy branches hang the votive wreath.

So,

So, while in honor of the ſmiling year,
Echoes each hollow dale and every grove;
Thy venerable ſhade a lay ſhall hear,
Sacred to friendſhip firm and conſtant love.

ELEGY

ELEGY IX.

Written Auguſt 24, 1767.

O Riſing Sun! on this auſpicious day
With brighter beams gild every hill and grove;
Ye feathered ſongſters, breathe a ſweeter lay!
And fill the echoing woods with joy and love.

And, honored M——, 'midſt thy green retreats
Let every tree a prouder foliage wear!
Let every floweret ſcatter livelier ſweets;
And vernal perfumes ſcent the autumnal year!

Now has the Sun one annual circuit paſt,
Since in thy happy ſhades theſe longing arms
Received the choiceſt bleſſings man could taſte,
MARIA's beauties, and MARIA's charms!

Yet

Yet witneſs every lawn, and every ſhade!
So dear a bliſs my boſom could not know,
When to my breaſt I claſped the yielding maid,
As now her wedded fondneſs can beſtow.

Let other youths, by vice or folly moved,
For each new object change their former flame;
And bluſh to own they love what once they loved,
Leſt virtue ſhould approve, and idiots blame.

The ſcorn of fools I ever ſhall deſpiſe;
For ever pleaſed, when by my conſtant ſide
MARIA's beauty meets the public eyes,
At home my pleaſure, and abroad my pride.

Where gold, not fondneſs, guards the nuptial chain,
Weak is the parent's will, the lawyer's art:
Blaſpheming prieſts thoſe hearts would join in vain,
Whom GOD and GOD's vicegerent, NATURE, part.

But,

But, oh! may we, whose hearts affection joined,
Preserve the bleſſing till the cloſe of life!
She in the huſband ſtill the lover find;
I ſtill enjoy the miſtreſs in the wife.

FINIS